

Springfield, PA — Today, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-7), visited Scenic Hills Elementary School, where he spoke with approximately 200 3rd and 4th graders and answered questions about his role as a Congressman and his former job as a Navy Admiral. As part of his discussion with the students, the Congressman emphasized the importance of education, noting that during his 31 years in the military, he watched the results of the military's investment in education and training. He also stated that we need to have the same investment in education by our federal and state governments.

In addition to meeting with the students, Congressman Sestak also read a book to the students, George Washington's Wooden Teeth, which gives a quirky historical account of President Washington's dental problems during historical milestones in his life: "The Revolutionary War/ George hoped would soon be won,/ But another battle with his teeth/ Had only just begun..." In reading the book, the Congressman noted that he was drawn to the history of George Washington given his previous role in the Navy as Commander of the George Washington Battle Group.

"One of the most important gifts we can give our children during the course of their lifetime is the ability to read," said Joe. "I am here today because I believe, as a member of Congress, it is one of my most important duties to ensure that our children receive the very best education that we can provide them."

Congressman Sestak visited Scenic Hills Elementary as part of the National Library Week. First sponsored in 1958, National Library Week is a national observance sponsored by the American Library Association (ALA) and libraries across the country each April, to celebrate the contributions of libraries, librarians and library workers to their schools, campuses and communities.

"Capturing the imagination of children through books is one of life's great pleasures," added Joe. "As a father, I often enjoy opening the eyes of my daughter through storytelling."

As a member of the Education and Labor Committee, Congressman Sestak has championed an early education agenda that focuses on giving our youth the tools to succeed in life, including support for crucial programs such as Head Start and Healthy Start. Joe recently held an education summit to provide an opportunity for education stakeholders in the 7th Congressional

district to discuss key educational issues with policy makers and education experts. The event consisted of panel discussions on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education, and Special Education, led by the Honorable George Miller, Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, and the Honorable Terrell Halaska, Assistant Secretary of Education.

During the Education Summit's panel discussion on early childhood education, Congressman Sestak's panelists and guests discussed the need to address three issues pertaining to Head Start: continued support of parental involvement in local Head Start policy councils; extending eligibility of Head Start for families up to 130 percent of the poverty level, ways to recruit retain head start teachers, including loan forgiveness. As a result of this discussion, Congressman Sestak worked with Chairman Miller to incorporate parental involvement in local Head Start policy councils and to extend the eligibility of Head Start families into H.R. 1429, the Improving Head Start Act. Joe also offered an amendment during the Head Start Reauthorization bill to provide loan forgiveness (up to \$17,500) for Head Start teachers, the same currently offered to math, science, and special education teachers.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.

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